

Board of Education Meeting
December 19, 2016

Call to Order

Board Chair Gee called the meeting to order at 6:33 p.m. in the Suffield High School Auditorium. Present: Board members Natalie Semyanko, Kendra Wiesel, Jeanne Gee, Matt Service, Lori D'Ostuni, Superintendent Karen Berasi, Assistant Superintendent Brian Hendrickson and Business Manager Bill Hoff.

The meeting opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Recognition

The Board recognized Giancarlo Isotti and Abby Halasi-Kun, this year's recipients of the Farmington Valley Superintendents Association Student Recognition Award. This award recognizes students' community service and service to others, academic achievement, and leadership service to the school community. They were also recognized at the Farmington Valley Superintendent's Association luncheon on December 16, 2016. Mr. Pearce explained the middle school's selection process and said Abby is engaging and involved in her school and community in a genuine way. Mr. Moccio said Giancarlo is involved in many clubs/activities at SHS. He is one of the students who is sought for assistance from the administration. He exemplifies student leadership and successfully manages his many school and extracurricular responsibilities. Board Chair Gee told Abby and Giancarlo that they inspire their peers and she thanked them and their parents. Giancarlo thanked the Board and Mr. Moccio. Ms. DePalma, Giancarlo's mother, thanked the school and specifically Mr. Moccio for mentoring her son.

Suffield High School Student Representative

Giancarlo updated the Board on events happening at SHS:

- Amgen Pharmaceuticals has donated some materials to the Science department for biotechnology work. SHS is the only high school in state to be awarded this grant.
- Seniors are finishing up their college applications
- The Art department published the 2nd edition of *Art Times*; ceramics classes are creating pueblo pottery; graphic arts classes are making linoleum print illustrations
- The SFES Writing grant was approved and walls in the writing lab will be painted with chalkboard paint
- SHS also received a building beautification grant from SFES.
- Mid-terms are the week of Jan. 17; course selections for next year are coming up as well
- AP English classes are going to NY on December 21
- FFA events: the holiday sale has concluded; food left over from the sale was donated to Loaves and Fishes as well as centerpieces made by the Agriscience students; the Farmers' Market was on November 28; 11 students attended a leadership training earlier this month; and a farm credit company talked to students about Agriscience finances
- Last Tuesday, students made cards to go to cancer patients
In advisory Hour of Code occurred last week; the winter door decorating contest is occurring tomorrow
- Friday is ugly sweater day
- Auditions for Cinderella, the spring musical performance, were held last week

- Seniors won Spirit Night and he thanked all for coming to the event
- The Giraffe Club collected food and gifts to donate;
- NHS collected almost \$7,000 for Toys for Tots
- The winter concert was on December 7
- The first teacher recognition award went to Mr. Janick, who embodies the spirit of Suffield High School
- The Student Senate is working on rewriting the school's constitution and restructuring for better student voice
- Athletics: winter sports have begun. SHS has committed to the CIAC Class Act School Sportsmanship framework

Public Comment

None

Approval of Minutes

Semyanko moved, D'Ostuni seconded to approve the November 21, 2016 minutes. Board member Wiesel said she worked with central office staff and other board members to revise the minutes as presented tonight. All members voted in favor. The motion carried 5-0.

Consent Agenda

None

Discussion/Action Items

- Number of Foreign Exchange Students Accepted for the 2017-2018 School Year
Mr. Moccio said per policy the Board is required to vote on the number of foreign exchange students accepted each year. He noted one family is interested for next year. There are no foreign exchange students this year. His recommendation is for two students. Ms. Berasi was in agreement with Mr. Moccio. The Board discussed looking at the policy to specify two students are accepted each year and if there are more students interested it would need to come to the Board for approval.
MOTION #17-21: D'Ostuni moved to accept two students for the 2017-2018 school year, and if there are more students interested, it will need to come back to the Board for consideration and proposal. Semyanko seconded and all members voted in favor. The motion carried 5-0.
- SHS Course Approvals: Horse Science - UCONN ECE/H and A; Animal Behavior UCONN ECE/H and A; English IV-H; Modern World History; American Government & Civics-H; International Relations-H
MOTION #17-22: D'Ostuni moved, Semyanko seconded to approve all of the above courses. Board member Service asked if these courses have impact on the 2017-2018 budget. Mr. Hoff said they are included in the 2017-2018 budget request. Most are a one-time cost, but there are some nominal recurring costs. In response to a Board member's question, Mr. Moccio said the costs of the courses were adjusted since the Teaching and Learning subcommittee meeting. In response to a Board member's question, Mr. Hendrickson said the cost of curriculum writing is a one-time cost unless the curriculum is revised. All members voted in favor. The motion carried 5-0.

- November 2016 Financial Report

Mr. Hoff reported the that financial status is in better shape this month than last month due to the district receiving more money in the Title I grant than expected. Title I is an entitlement grant based on the free and reduced lunch population. Ms. Berasi noted next year's budget did not assume this year's total since Title I grant funding is inconsistent.

- Discussion of the Capital Budget Plan

Mr. Hoff distributed a list of the capital projects in priority order showing the description, category, priority and amount. Since the last budget subcommittee meeting a couple of weeks ago a few changes have been made. He reviewed the list and the changes. The total request is \$1,255,000. Ms. Osleger explained the technology infrastructure item, which would provide offsite backup that the district currently does not have. In response to a Board member's question, Ms. Osleger said there is approximately a \$500 a year recurring cost. The VOIP is a priority for Town. Ms. Osleger met with Melissa Mack and Michael Stevens to discuss timelines. The Town wanted to issue an RFP in the fall with implementation by January 2017. The district's timeline is for a July 1 implementation. There is a lot of infrastructure work that needs to be done to switch to VOIP. The Board discussed quality of service of VOIP systems and the funding for this project. Superintendent Berasi added this is a big project and needs to be done thoughtfully and systematically. The Board discussed the Town's miscalculation in the cost to repair the tennis courts at the high school, which is approximately an additional \$100,000. It was noted the tennis courts are a safety issue. Repairs to the outdoor basketball court at SHS are on the ACCE list because it would be more cost effective to bid both the tennis courts and basketball court together. Mr. Hoff said the plan is to get on the ACCE January 27 agenda. The Board needs to approve the ACCE request before this meeting. Ms. Berasi said the ACCE request will be on the Board's January 17 agenda for approval.

Reports to the Board

Superintendent's Report

- Ms. Berasi said State Representative, Tami Zawistowski, visited the high school today and observed Mr. Casinghino's film class and French class, Mr. Janick's algebra class, and Mr. Grimard's astronomy class. She was impressed with the instruction occurring in each classroom.
- Superintendent Berasi said the minutes of the December 12 Board of Finance (BOF) meeting was brought to her attention earlier this afternoon. She encouraged Board members to read the minutes because the meeting she had with Justin Donnelly, Melissa Mack and George Beiter was misrepresented. In addition, the First Selectman's statements relative to the proposed early release day for the 2017-2018 school year were inaccurate. Neither the First Selectman nor anyone else from the Town has contacted her to get an understanding of the proposal. Ms. Berasi said she continues to seek a collaborative relationship with the Town for them to understand the work of the school district. By putting this erroneous information in Town meeting minutes as "facts" to the public is concerning and problematic. Board Chair Gee said the Board is also interested in open communication with all Town boards and commissions, noting she had personally reached out to the First Selectman offering discussion, artifacts, and clarification. For the public record the Board would like public clarification of the information presented at the BOF meeting, and the Board discussed next steps to rectify these concerns. Ms. Berasi said she will contact Mr. Donnelly and Ms. Mack. She also encouraged Board members to attend the next BOF meeting.

Board Chair's Report

- Board Chair Gee will contact the First Selectman and BOF members. A meeting with Board of Education executives and First Selectman will also be scheduled to address concerns relative to communication. Misinformation that is presented as facts is detrimental to the district's goal of advancing student achievement.

Business Manager's Report

- Mr. Hoff said the BOF minutes also referenced an audit report of the high school project where the Town reported \$871,000 is due back to the State. Mr. Hoff stated this is not entirely accurate as the State has not asked for the payment. We are better off waiting until the Large Animal Facility (LAF) project is finished as we will receive much of the amount due back when the LAF and Greenhouse projects are audited. There is still outstanding work to be done in the LAF that was funded through the State construction grant. The Permanent Building Commission (PBC) is still overseeing the outstanding roof work and floor of the LAF, and until those projects are done, the projects cannot be closed out.

Subcommittee Reports

Curriculum Cabinet Meeting of December 6, 2016 - Board member Semyanko said Mr. Moccio presented the vision for the high school. They also discussed the grading policy and report cards, and getting students' input on these topics. The cabinet also received an update on the early release proposal.

Future Business

Recording of meetings

Adjournment

Semyanko moved, Service seconded to adjourn the meeting at 8:03 p.m.

Minutes are subject to approval at the next meeting of January 3, 2017 meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Lori D'Ostuni
Secretary